




**State of Mississippi**  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR**  
PHIL BRYANT  
AUDITOR

DATE: January 18, 2005

TO: Governor Haley Barbour  
Lt. Governor Amy Tuck  
Members of the Mississippi Legislature

FROM: Phil Bryant   
State Auditor

RE: MS Beef Processors

As many of you know, the Auditor's Office has issued five reports on the Land, Water and Timber Resources Board and Mississippi Beef Processors. A special icon has been added to our web site leading the user directly to these reports should you care to review each. The web site can be accessed at [www.osa.state.ms.us](http://www.osa.state.ms.us).

My staff is currently completing a more comprehensive report regarding the Mississippi Beef Processors project. I know you are eager to have as much information as possible about this issue and we want to provide it with all haste. However, pertinent information is arriving daily that we believe should be included. We are waiting for other documents that are also important to the completeness of the audit. This information must then be checked and verified for it to meet our audit standards for accuracy. Although this process takes time, it is critically necessary. I hope PEER will join this audit process for review and comment of the report's substance. It is my desire to have this difficult process completed and the report on your desk by January 31, 2005.

It's important to remember the audit will not include information that addresses any alleged or specific criminal acts. Rules that apply to an investigation prohibit such an open discussion at this time. I assure you we will pursue any illegal acts related to this case no matter where they lead. However, I will not allow rumors or gossip to become part of my report or discussions. The rule of law, as well as civility must apply at the Auditor's Office above all others. Rest assured we will not stop until all your questions are answered.

I hope you understand our abundance of caution in issuing this report. The document will be closely scrutinized by public officials, the media and the public. Although it will not satisfy everyone, it must be as accurate and comprehensive as possible within the time restraints.

Currently I am working with the Governor, Lt. Governor and the appropriate chairmen to craft legislation incorporating my recommendations of January 3, 2005 regarding placing standards into general legislation which will help reduce the risk of problems from occurring in future economic development projects funded by the State of Mississippi. The cooperation of the Legislature and the Mississippi Development Authority in this effort has been encouraging and greatly appreciated. I am sincerely grateful for each of you who have supported the legislation.

If, after you have reviewed this and other information provided on our web site other questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact me. I and my staff stand ready to brief any related committee or legislative body when called.